UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.3/47/7
18 November 1992

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Forty-seventh session
THIRD COMMITTEE
Agenda item 97 (b)

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Letter dated 16 November 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the Tunis Declaration adopted at the African regional meeting held in Tunis from 2 to 6 November 1992 in preparation for the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights to be convened in Vienna in 1993.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session under agenda item 97 (b).

(Signed) Hamadi KHOUINI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

AFRICAN PREPARATORY MEETING (TUNIS, 2 TO 6 NOVEMBER 1992)
FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Tunis Declaration

The African regional meeting held in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights, which met in Tunis from 2 to 6 November, concluded with the adoption of a 13-point Declaration.

Known as the Tunis Declaration, the document was adopted by representatives of 41 African States and 180 non-governmental organizations.

The text of the Declaration is as follows:

"The Ministers and representatives of the African States meeting in Tunis from 2 to 6 November 1992 in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights and pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/116,

Considering the importance of the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, which is being held in the aftermath of the structural changes that have taken place in international relations and on the eve of a new international order,

Considering the increasingly privileged position being given to the protection and promotion of human rights among the concerns of the international community,

Taking note with satisfaction of the advance made in enacting human rights provisions and of the progress accomplished in applying them throughout the world,

Recognizing, however, that there are both endogenous and exogenous difficulties which delay or impede the satisfactory implementation of human rights on a global scale,

Considering that the essential objective of the World Conference on Human Rights is precisely to identify these difficulties and advocate measures to be taken nationally and internationally to overcome them,

Aware of the importance of the debates which will take place during the World Conference on Human Rights and of the impact of the resulting conclusions on the direction of future United Nations activities in the field,

Desiring to contribute to the success of the World Conference and to share African concerns with the international community in the field of the promotion of human rights and the rights of the citizen,

Have adopted this Declaration entitled the Tunis Declaration, which reflects their convictions as well as their expectations:

1. The commitment of the African States to the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is irreversible;

2. The universality of human rights is unquestionable; their protection and promotion constitute a duty for all States without regard to their political, economic or cultural system;

3. The administration of justice and the independence of the judiciary are conditions sine qua non for the full realization of human rights. However, that goal cannot possibly be achieved without a substantial effort to further the administration of justice. The African States and the international community must therefore devote more resources to this area;

4. Responsibility for the implementation and promotion of human rights rests primarily with Governments. The institutions, organizations and structures that constitute society also have an important role to play in safeguarding and publicizing those rights and therefore deserve to be strengthened and encouraged;

5. Respect for human rights is undeniably a matter of international concern. No preconceived model, however, can be prescribed on a universal scale. The promotion of human rights in the world is a goal to the attainment of which all States, without exception, are called upon to contribute;

6. The principle of the indivisibility of human rights is sacrosanct. Civil and political rights cannot be dissociated from economic, social and cultural rights. None of those rights occupies a privileged position vis-à-vis the others;

7. Political freedom, unless accompanied by respect for economic, social and cultural rights, remains precarious;

8. The right to development is inalienable;

9. Human rights, development and international peace are interdependent;

10. Lasting progress towards the implementation of human rights requires effective development policies at the national level, more equitable economic relations at the international level, and a favourable economic environment;

11. Extremism and religious, racial or any other kind of fanaticism once again pose a serious threat to the protection and promotion of the universal values of human rights, and Governments, individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations are called upon to make efforts, take the necessary measures and cooperate in order to meet this threat;

12. Africa, which has voluntarily chosen the path of democracy, economic liberalization and the promotion of human rights in an unfavourable international environment, and which finds itself particularly exposed to internal tensions arising out of the failure to satisfy the essential needs of the people and the rise of extremism, will nevertheless continue to uphold its choices and to fulfil its responsibilities. It expects the international community to fulfil its own, especially through the strengthening of international solidarity, an adequate increase in development aid and an appropriate settlement of the debt problem;

13. Africa, which remains committed to individual rights, at the same time reaffirms the importance it attaches to a respect for the collective rights of peoples. For that reason, it is particularly concerned by the persistence of apartheid in South Africa, the renewal of massive and systematic violations of human rights as a result of foreign occupation, for example in the occupied Arab territories, armed conflicts such as that in Somalia, and the emergence of the policy of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it reaffirms the right of all nations to self-determination and to the free choice of their political and economic systems and institutions on the basis of respect for national sovereignty."